

Two Pillars of Innovation Process Research: From Motivational Theory to Institutional Perspective

Kwangho Jung (Seoul National University)

Numerous theories of the innovation process have evolved into three main categories: (1) personal motivation, (2) institutions, and (3) political, economic, and social elements. This paper reviews how individual motivation theories and various institutional characteristics inherent in organizational formation and evolution influence innovation.

First, motivation theory has been attracting attention as a driving force that fosters and promotes the desire for innovation. Motivational theories about innovation are primarily composed of selfish and altruistic dimensions. Motivational elements of the innovation process are composed of pathways leading to innovation performance by the mediating effects of selfless and selfish motives on creativity, inclusiveness, and openness. Recently, the motivational approach applied to social and public innovation comes from altruism research. A suitable example is an approach that studies the impact of Public Service Motivation (PSM) and the connection path of innovation.

Second, institutional analysis on the innovation process includes research on collaboration and network analysis, searching for organizational structure for innovation, and institutionalization of innovation. As an appropriate example, open innovation originates from primitive institutional characteristics such as collaboration and networks. These essential institutional characteristics are structured and created as managerial software embedded in an organization, which emerges as an innovation-friendly or disruptive organization. Furthermore, institutionalizing innovation evolves an innovation-friendly system. Steve Jobs, for example, designed Apple as a global symbol of the innovation process, demonstrating his institutional leadership for future innovation. The origins of many innovation processes have illustrated that institutional leadership matters.

This paper considered only two dimensions of the pillars of the innovation process: motives and institutions. Further research can examine how political institutions such as democracy and civic participation, economic systems such as the ownership-based market economy and sharing-based market economy, and social characteristics such as mechanical and organic societies influence innovation. Furthermore, additional research should focus on lessons from a comparative historical perspective on how diverse individual and institutional factors interact with the political, economic, and social systems to promote or suppress the innovation process.

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